

My Corvette Story

Bob Martina

HOW IT STARTED FOR ME: My first encounter with a Corvette was in late summer of 1958. I remember riding with my Family in our '54 Mercury Station Wagon, I was sitting in the back seat. A new '59 Corvette with two guys in it pulled up next to us. When they looked over, my face was plastered against the window. They waved at me, dropped down a gear, and blew past my Dad with the rear tires smoking; I was impressed, my Dad wasn't (I think pissed would cover his feelings better).

When I was 16, I scraped up \$300 and bought a '55 Chevy Bel Air 2dr HT. I joined a Car club called the Hurst Men, Most of us had '55 or '56 Chevy's. One of our members (George) always had a new car. In '64 he had a '65 Impala SS 396. In '65 he got a '66 427 450 HP Corvette as a High School Graduation gift, I can still remember the first time I saw that car. The Hurst Men held meetings in a one-car garage on an alley. George was always late. We were in the garage waiting to start the meeting; it felt like the whole place started shaking. We ran outside to see what was causing it, a nasty sounding Corvette Coupe was idling, quivering, and shaking in the alley. George was behind the wheel with a big grin on his face. Before we could get close he revved it to about 3500 RPM and popped the clutch. The whole alley filled with smoke; by the time it had cleared enough to see, George had circled the block, and was back in front of us again. His Dad sold the Corvette when George dropped out of College in '67.

I wanted that car so bad I could taste it, but I didn't have the money. I got my chance in '68; the second owner lost his license street racing, and had to sell it. The timing was perfect for me. I had been saving every nickle could, and had the \$2100 he was asking for it. That Corvette was nosebleed fast, it slammed you back in the seat so hard, you couldn't move.

One of my friends bought a new '69 SS 396 Nova and wanted to race. We took our cars out to a two-lane country road, where I proceeded to blow his doors off. He bought a '70 454 465 HP Crate Engine from GM, installed it, and wanted a rematch, I blew his doors off again. After installing a 4:56 gear set he was able to beat me in the 1/4-mile, but 2 seconds after a rolling start from 55 MPH, his Nova was a tiny dot in my mirror. The '66 was the first in a series of Corvettes I've owned over the years. Currently I own an '02 6spd Convertible, and the '65 396 425 HP Coupe I bought in '77.

Your President Bob Martina